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VISTARA MAKES ITS LAST FLIGHT AHEAD OF MERGER WITH AIR INDIA

The airline operated its last international and domestic flights as an independent airline on Monday night ahead of its merger with Air India

DELHI-SINGAPORE FLIGHT WAS AIRLINE'S LAST

Vistara's last domestic flight departed Mumbai for Delhi around 11.15 pm on Monday. Almost half-an-hour later, its last international flight, bound for Singapore, took to the skies from the Delhi airport. Vistara commenced its flight operations in January 2015. The airline, a joint venture between Tata Group and Singapore Airlines, will merge with Air India on Tuesday | P15

VISTARA'S 'UK' CODE GIVES WAY TO 'AI2'

- Post the merger, the airline's 'UK' code will be replaced with a special four-digit Air India code — 'AI2XXX'. Vistara has a fleet of 70 airplanes
- The merger marks the second major consolidation wave in the country's fast-growing civil aviation space after Indian Airlines merged with Air India and Air Sahara merged with Jet Airways in 2006-2007

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THE SIZE OF AIR INDIA'S AIRCRAFT FLEET POST THE MERGER WITH VISTARA

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Ten suspected militants shot dead in Manipur

Kuki-Zo Council says its 'volunteers' killed by CRPF, calls for total shutdown in state today

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @Guwahati

TEN militants were killed and a CRPF jawan was injured in a gunfight in restive Manipur's Jiribam district on Monday. Manipur police said in a statement that the incident occurred at around 3 pm when armed militants attacked the CRPF post located at the Jakuradhor and Borobekra Police Station, located nearby.

"The security forces retaliated strongly. Due to the attack, one CRPF constable namely Sanjeev Kumar sustained bullet injury and has been evacuated to Silchar Medical College, Assam and is under treatment," the statement said. It added that the CRPF and civil police personnel fiercely retaliated and the situation was brought under control after 40-45 minutes of heavy exchange of fire.

Police said they searched the whole area after the firing ceased and found the bodies of 10 militants along with arms and ammunition. The weapons recovered included three AK series rifles, four SLRs, two INSAS rifles, one RPG, one Pump Action Gun besides bullet-proof helmets and magazines.

"A criminal case has been registered and is being investigated into. Operations in and around Jakuradhor, under Borobekra Police Station, Jiribam District continued to flush out armed militants. Reinforcement teams consisting of Assam Rifles, CRPF and Civil Police have been rushed there," the statement added.

Reacting to the gunfight, the Kuki-Zo Council said its 'volunteers' were killed and announced a dawn-to-dusk shutdown on Tuesday. It said the protest is "in honour of the victims and to express our collective grief and solidarity who were brutally shot dead".

NEW CJI SWORN IN

President Droupadi Murmu administers the oath of office to Justice Sanjiv Khanna as the 51st Chief Justice of India, at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Monday | P11

CLEAN AIR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT OF CITIZENS, SAYS SC

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @New Delhi

THE Supreme Court said on Monday that it is a fundamental right of every citizen to live in a pollution-free atmosphere, adding no religion encourages any activity that creates pollution.

Pulling up Delhi authorities over their failure to enforce firecracker ban during Diwali, a bench of justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih said if firecrackers are burnt in this fashion, it will also affect the fundamental right to health of the citizens.

"The right to live in a pollution-free atmosphere is a fundamental right of every citizen which is protected by Article 21 of the Constitution of India. Prima facie we are of the view that no religion encourages any activity that creates pollution or compromises with the health of the people," the bench observed. The Delhi government issued an order banning the use of firecrackers on October 14. "There is nothing filed in the affidavit that the order imposing ban was communicated to those who have been permitted to manufacture, store and sell crackers," the bench told Delhi Police.

Zameer at it again, calls HDK 'Kaala'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

WITH just two days for byelections to the legislative Assembly in the state, Housing and Waqf Minister BZ Zameer Ahmed made a controversial remark by calling Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy "Kaala (dark complexion) Kumaraswamy".

BJP and JDS leaders were quick to launch a scathing attack on Zameer for his derogatory remark and urged Ramanagara Police to initiate action against him.

While campaigning for Channapatna Congress candidate CP Yogeshwara on Sunday evening, Zameer said, "If there is anyone who can defeat 'Kaaliya Kumaraswamy', it is tiger Yogeshwara." During his speech, the minister used words such as 'Kaaliya' and 'Kaala' to target Kumaraswamy. A video of the speech has gone viral and netizens too have slammed Zameer.

HD Kumaraswamy

BZ Zameer Ahmed

JDS leaders, who expressed their anguish online, also sought Zameer's resignation. "Through this remark, Zameer has insulted the community to which Kumarawamy belongs. He also tried to disturb peace and harmony in society," they said.

Be it Overseas Congress chairperson Sam Pitroda or Zameer, it has become a habit for Congress leaders to indulge in racism. They only know to divide society. It is their culture and JDS is not scared of them, they said. They also tagged Congress leaders, including AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge, and questioned Zameer about the colour of their skin. P4

EXPRESS READ

SC rejects bail plea of ex-MP Prajwal Revanna

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday denied bail to former JDS Lok Sabha member Prajwal Revanna, accused of rape and sexual assault. Rejecting the bail plea, a bench of Justices Bela M Trivedi and Satish Chandra Sharma observed Revanna was a "very influential person". Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, representing the politician, argued that the chargesheet had been filed in the case without the charge of Section 376 (rape) of the Indian Penal Code | P5

315 farmers fought against Waqf claims, got back land

RAGHOTTAM KOPPAR @Gadag

FARMERS from the Gadag district and its surrounding areas, who launched a legal battle in August 2022 against the local Waqf Board's claims over their lands, have now got their properties back in their names.

In all, 315 farmers went to a local court against the claims of the board over their lands. Many of them have now launched a campaign to raise awareness among other farmers who are facing a similar problem.

Many have been deprived of crop insurance compensation and other government facilities because of the row over ownership of their lands.

Farmers, most of whom are illiterates, did not know what was happening with regard to the ownership of their lands as they have been listed as Waqf properties.

CONTINUED ON P5

BIGGER BURDEN

Apts, hotels may have to pay ₹12/kg as garbage cess

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

BBMP Chief Commissioner **Tushar Girinath** said on Monday that the palike has a proposal to impose a cess of Rs 12 per kg of garbage on bulk generators of waste.

Addressing the media here, he said this is because many apartment complexes, hotels and malls generate more than 100 kg of waste daily and send it to BBMP's compactors, increasing the burden on landfills and the garbage collection system. The proposed cess is to regulate them. The proposal has been sent to the state government for approval, he said.

If bulk generators of waste fail to declare details, palike will double the cess amount per kg up to four months under the solid waste management rules. They have to find a solution to tackle the issue. "We are talking to bulk waste generators such as apartment complexes, hotels and industries. We will get them listed with empanelled processors. If this happens, the city will also benefit," Girinath said. P2

Only one teacher in 6,158 govt schools in Karnataka

RISHITA KHANNA @Bengaluru

ABOUT 6,158 government schools in the state have just one teacher each, responsible for 1.38 lakh students, while 530 schools, with zero enrollment – no students at all – have 358 teachers.

This shows a serious flaw in the system. While some schools have only a few teachers (one in many cases), others have excess staff despite having zero enrolment.

The department, however, has said that teachers from zero-enrollment schools have been transferred to wherever there is requirement.

The total number of single-teacher schools in the state decreased by 202, from 6,360 in 2023-24 to 6,158 in 2024-25. However, the enrollment also dropped by 33,794, which experts link to a rise in dropout rates.

Lack of subject teachers is driving students away. As in many cases, teachers are assigned only to teach Kannada or social studies and not core subjects such as mathematics and science or even English. At the same time, to maintain the "100% pass rate," schools often "push academically weaker students out", according to experts.

Child rights activist and executive director of Child Rights Trust Vasudev Sharma said teachers in these schools only teach Kannada or social studies. "Parents, understandably, want their children to attend schools where maths and science are taught. As a result, many opt for aided or private schools," he said.

Moreover, by the time a student reaches the upper primary level, schools deliberately push out those who are not academically strong to maintain "the 100% pass rate" in Class 10, a figure that, he argued, does not reflect real education standards, but hides the system's failure.

He said no one questions why dropout rates surge between Classes 7 and 8, and Class 10. P5

EXPLOSION

TRIGGERS FIRE AT INDIAN OIL REFINERY IN GUJARAT

A 32-year-old worker was killed in the fire at the refinery in Vadodara. A benzene storage tank at the facility caught fire after the blast | P10

COP29 OPENS

India must adopt more robust Met system

SV KRISHNA CHAITANYA

EXPRESS IN BAKU

INDIA has to enhance its meteorological infrastructure and adopt a more robust multi-hazard early warning system to avoid loss of lives and minimise the impact of climate change, World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Secretary-General Celeste Saulo told this newspaper on Monday.

The WMO State of the Climate 2024 was released during the United National Climate Conference (COP29), which began in Baku, Azerbaijan, earlier in the day. The report issued a red alert as 2024 is on the track to be the warmest year on record. From January to September this year, the average global temperature was 1.54°C above pre-industrial level. However, seen from a long-term perspective, the average warming is below 1.5°C.

Saulo said WMO works very closely with the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), whose Director General of Meteorology Mrutyunjay Mohapatra is one of the three vice-presidents of WMO. "India is very active and making good investments to enhance meteorological services. But, India being such a large country, there is a lot of scope for improvement. Especially, in bringing the Met services into the value chain. Active engagement between the Met department and other ministries like agriculture, health and disaster management is vital," she told this newspaper on the sidelines of the WMO presser.

When asked about events like the Wayanad landslide disaster, which killed over 400 people, the WMO chief said this is where multi-hazard early warning system will come in handy. "There are many things happening at the same time. We need to analyse and react in a holistic way. We need the Met services as well as other agencies to work closely so as to understand the risks."

India is also facing a serious threat of sea level rise, given its its long coastline and dense population near the coasts. Saulo said, in March, the WMO will release a more detailed report, which would look at the region-wise impact due to sea level rise.

CONTINUED ON: P12

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